

March 21, 2006



Ms. Eranell McIntosh-Wilson  
Associate Commissioner  
Department of Mental Health  
And Mental Retardation  
100 Union Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Ms. McIntosh-Wilson:

I am addressing this letter to you because we were informed in a recent staff meeting that you were the Acting Director of Community Services while Fordyce Mitchel was working on the Harmony Project. The purpose of this letter is to report that I am a victim of harassment and retaliation and to request that the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (DMH/MR) administrators take immediate steps to correct this situation. I do not make this accusation lightly. I want you to know immediately that I am not a disgruntled employee. I am a dedicated employee of 19 years and take my job seriously. I have tried not to write this letter. However, I feel that I have no other recourse at this time.

There is such a disparity of treatment in the manner in which my supervisor, Jerryln London treats me as compared to the manner in which she treats other employees that I am becoming more emotionally distressed everyday. The harassment and retaliation is subtle, systematic, and intended to cause me unnecessary tension and stress. The harassment and retaliation has to end now. I have a problem with being singled out and harassed for things that are commonplace occurrences in Region III Community Services. I do not know the reasons for the harassment and retaliation.

I first would like to provide to you details of two of the most troubling incidents: On March 8, 2006, I verbally informed Ms. London that I would not be attending Spring Conference due to having medical treatment to alleviate pain and inflammation in my knee. Ms. London gave me a verbal okay to not attend Spring Conference. On March 9, 2006, Ms. London called and left a voice mail message saying, "I called to see if you were going to Spring Conference, I can't recall whether you said you were going to be out because of your knee, send me a e-mail." I called Ms. London back and left her a message saying, "As I informed you earlier, I will not be going to Spring Conference due to the medical treatment I am receiving for my knee." On March 10, 2006, Ms. London left a message on my voicemail saying, "I really need your help with registration, if you can't come the other two days, this is fine, right now I have you helping Lori with registration, if you can't come, I need you to bring a doctor's statement." I called her back and told her, "I will not be able to go."



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I asked Ms. London when did we start bringing doctor's statements and she informed me "this was not out of the ordinary." If what Ms. London said about bringing a doctor's statement "was not out of the ordinary" was true for the employees in Region III Community Services, I would not have a problem. However, requiring a doctor's statement from any employee is very much out of the ordinary for Region III Community Services employees. Not since I been an employee in Community Services has anyone brought or been asked for a doctor's statement. On March 13, 2006, I was checking my e-mails and pulled a copy of an e-mail Ms. London sent to Jeff Williams informing Mr. Williams that I would not be attending Spring Conference and she would see if she could find someone else to help with registration. After receiving Ms. London's e-mail to Mr. Williams I assumed the incident was closed and submitted my leave slip. On March 16, 2006, I received another called from Ms. London saying that "she really needed me to be at Spring Conference and if I could not come I would need to bring a doctor's statement because I would be out for 3 consecutive days. Ms. London further went on to inform me that I would have to file for family medical leave due to being out for three consecutive days. I told Ms. London I believed that an employee had to file family medical leave when an employee was out for more than three consecutive days and she replied, "I need to check the policy." Since Ms. London was making a major issue out of me not going to Spring Conference and needing me to help with registration, after I spoke to Ms. London, I spoke to Donna Buckley explaining my situation and that Ms. London needed someone to assist with registration. Ms. Buckley said, "she informed Ms. London and Beth Rodgers that she would assist with Spring Conference wherever she was needed and that she would do registration." After my conversation with Ms. Buckley I attempted to call Ms. London and got her voicemail. I left a message on Ms. London's voicemail informing her that Ms. Buckley volunteered to do registration at Spring Conference. Ms. London called me back and said, "I appreciate you finding someone but Donna may have another assignment." "I don't have the assignments in front of me but I will check with Beth Rodgers, but I need everyone's help and if you are not going to attend you will need to bring a doctor's statement."

This is not about Spring Conference. This is just a way to harass me. I think it was very unprofessional for Ms. London to lead me to think initially that it was ok for me not to attend Spring Conference and then say that she had forgotten. People have always attended or not attended Spring Conference as desired. There have always been enough people to handle registration. People from other community agencies as well as other people in other divisions in DMH/MR have worked registration. There are 20 people in our building who can help with registration. People generally perform multiple tasks during Spring Conference.

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If there is a shortage of people to work registration and Ms. London as she said needed everyone's help, I ask you, why did Ms. London give the person that does registration permission to be on annual leave during Spring Conference?

By Ms. London's actions she is also insinuating that I am lying about my medical treatment. I am only trying to avoid having a third surgery on my knee and get relief from my constant pain.

The second troubling incident was the attempt to lower my appraisal score without any cause during my annual employee evaluation on December 20, 2005. Prior to my annual evaluation, I had the 6 months pre-appraisal. Ms. London, during my pre-appraisal evaluation said my job performance was fine and there were no problems. When I pointed out to Ms. London that she had never discussed any problems with me and the policy stated that she could not lower my score without provocation and must inform me of my deficits, she said, "I will have to check the policy." After checking the policy, she raised the score. Since that were no mention of problems with my work and there have been no complaints about my work to this day, I feel her actions were clearly retaliatory. I have always performed my job responsibilities with care and accuracy. I take it very personally when my job performance is belittled.

There have been other incidents where I have been singled out, such as when my door is ajar (not closed, ajar), although there are other employees that have their doors ajar or completely closed most days, including the secretary. I was unaware that having your door ajar or closed was a violation of any policy. Ms. London also informed me that I was leaving 15 minutes early. I often come in early and have no idea what occasion/occasions she was talking about. Employees come in late regularly (this includes Ms. London) and not a word is said to the employees. Yes, I am aware of the 8:00 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. work hours but if it does not apply to all employees, including Ms. London and Ms. London's friends, then it should not apply to anyone.

Ms. London seems to have hidden agendas. I don't know if they are personal or directed by the Department of DMH/MR but I have had enough. I am apprehensive and dread coming to work because I don't know what type of harassment or retaliation I may receive from Ms. London.

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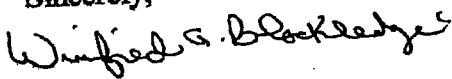
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Ms. London shows partiality to her friends, does not know DMH/MR policies and makes the rules up as she goes along. I have attempted to stay in my office, do my job and avoid the pettiness but this doesn't work. I could go on about the lax atmosphere but I truly don't care what the other employees do. I simply want the harassment and retaliation to stop. I simply want to be treated in a fair manner. I simply want to be treated as a professional and be allowed to do my job to the best of my ability. I hope that we can resolve this problem without my having to pursue further avenues.

Sincerely,



Winifred A. Blackledge

P. C. John Houston

Commissioner, Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation

Josh Wilson

Wiggins, Childs, Quinn & Pantazis

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